



City of Atlanta Southwest Atlanta Sidewalk Improvement Project

Record of Public Meeting – February 19, 2007

The City of Atlanta Department of Public Works in conjunction with the Department of Planning and Community Development held a public meeting on February 19th at the Providence Missionary Baptist Church located at 2295 Benjamin E. Mays Drive. The purpose of the meeting was to provide an update to the community on the status of the Cascade Streetscape projects, introduce the Southwest Atlanta Sidewalk Improvement project, and to provide information on proposed recommendations for rezoning for the Cascade corridor.

A total of twenty-four (24) citizens attended the meeting. The meeting was opened with introductions and a presentation of the Southwest Atlanta Sidewalk Improvement Program. The process of developing design concepts for sidewalk improvements in the study area and the main goals of the program were presented as follows:

Sidewalk & Streetscape Improvement Projects

The Cascade Road Streetscape Project includes three phases:

- Phase 1, completed in Fall 2005 included
- Phase 2 includes work along Cascade from Beecher to Fontaine as well as the triangular area created by Beecher Road, Cascade Road, and Benjamin E. Mays Drive
- Phase 3 includes work along Cascade from Venetian to Beecher. This project includes new sidewalks, decorative paving, pedestrian lighting, street tree planting, plaza space, and the re-alignment of Benjamin E. Mays Drive.

The Southwest Atlanta Sidewalk Improvement project will provide continuous ADA accessible sidewalks as follows:

- North side of Benjamin E. Mays Drive
- Both sides of Cascade Road between Fontaine Avenue and De Lowe Drive
- Both sides of Fontaine Avenue between Poole Road and Cascade Road.

The existing sidewalks will be upgraded to ADA standards and new ADA accessible sidewalks will be installed in locations where sidewalks do not currently exist.

The study team presented several design concepts to solicit feedback from the community. The presentation was followed with a Q&A session and closed thereafter by Jim Maddox, District 11 Representative.

Proposed Recommendations for Rezoning

A brief presentation about the proposed recommendations for rezoning was conducted by Charletta Wilson Jacks, City of Atlanta Zoning Administrator and Assistant Director, Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD). The DPCD is reviewing proposed rezoning options for the Cascade Heights area. Their plan is to review the recommendations from the Campbellton Road/Cascade Road Corridor Study, conduct a site visit and then prepare an overall summary that will include recommended zoning classifications and an associated time frame. This site visit will be conducted early March 2007. Citizens were provided a copy of the Campbellton-Cascade Corridor Redevelopment Plan Report. Ms. Jacks directed residents to review the zoning recommendations and to become familiar with it. As legislation comes forward citizens will know the basis for the legislation. She provided contact information for citizens with additional questions and concerns regarding the legislation process.



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Q&A Session

Q: There are issues with maintaining planting strips in the area. Instead of planting strips, I recommend doing something else to add greenery to avoid a battle of who will maintain it. Suggest finding another green alternative. Can you give a timeline for the implementation of this project?

A: Winter 2007. The biggest hurdle on Cascade Phase 2 is going to be right-of-way acquisitions. We will have to pay for easements and right-of-way. That's the biggest portion in terms of time: our plans are complete and there are no environmental issues of record.

Q: Looking at some of the projects being done, it appears the trees being planted are too close to the street. Therefore as they grow they create a problem. Is it wise to put the tree so close to the curb that it causes a problem or should they be located somewhere differently in the area so they don't create a problem?

A: We are actually making the sidewalks larger and installing smaller trees that will be setback 3 feet from the curb. All of the trees for the Southwest Atlanta Sidewalk Project will be planted behind the sidewalk.

Q: The Beecher Street sidewalks stop at Highview – is this going to be a part of finishing up the sidewalks along Beecher? There are two houses built on Beecher and all of the sidewalks in front of those houses are torn up – who will be responsible for redoing the sidewalks?

A: Typically the property owner is responsible – we ask that in situations where you are aware of hazardous sidewalk, that you contact the Department of Public Works Customer Service line at (404) 330-6333 or via email to publicworks@atlantaga.gov. We will notify the property owner and make them aware of the problem.

Q: Right at Beecher, coming down from Highview where the sidewalk ends, there is a drainage problem. Every time it rains there is a puddle of water remaining that is very dangerous because it is in the curb going around Beecher.

A: Please contact the Department of Public Works Customer Service line at (404) 330-6333 or via email to publicworks@atlantaga.gov. We will inspect the situation to determine the appropriate action.

Q: Several years ago we were told that sidewalks would be placed on Campbellton Road coming down from Delowe Drive from Cascade Road to Campbellton Road. Sidewalks were placed from the old library through Adams Park near the baseball diamond and that's it.

A: The representatives at the meeting were not aware of the project, but will look into it. The scope of this project may have been dependent upon the funding source.



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Q&A Session (Continued)

Q: Please clarify the location for this project.

A: Complete sidewalk will be installed heading towards the northeast to Willis Mill. There are currently sidewalks on the south side of Benjamin E. Mays and this project will allow for sidewalks on the north side of Benjamin E. Mays Drive.

Q: I'm not familiar with the term "Streetscape" can you explain that to us?

A: A streetscape is defined as sidewalk improvements that typically include street lights, trees, brick pavers and sometimes furniture, i.e. benches and trash receptacles.

Q: Are the sidewalks being developed for safety or aesthetics?

A: We are installing sidewalks citywide that promote pedestrian safety and enhance walkability.

Q: Who do we talk to about requesting sidewalks on a particular street?

A: The point person on sidewalks in your district is the council member and he is the person who will make sure your information goes to the right person. However, we strongly recommend that you participate in the Neighborhood Planning Unit process whereby projects are selected based on the priorities of the community and collectively brought before the City's Department of Planning for consideration. To find out more about the NPU process please visit www.atlantaga.gov or call (404) 330-6899.

Q: What are the limits for the sidewalk project on Beecher Road? We are concerned that the project was not done in the area where it was needed – which is where it is most dangerous for pedestrians.

A: The sidewalks on Beecher Road are from Cascade Road to Benjamin E. Mays Drive. The representatives at this meeting will forward this concern to the project management team responsible for that project for review.

Q: I want to be on the record of saying Beecher Street from Mays to the curb is very unsafe and very dangerous driving at night with people walking up and down the street. I don't see how you could not prioritize Beecher Road for sidewalks on one side. Beauty is good, but safety is better.

A: The representatives at this meeting will forward this concern to the project management team responsible for that project for review.

Q: Who is responsible for maintaining sidewalks once they are installed and is the responsible property owner informed?



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Q&A Session (Continued)

A: As per the City Code, the abutting property owner is responsible for maintaining the sidewalks. When projects begin, we try to work with a community liaison to assist us in educating the community of this requirement.

Q: When these opportunities for project funding become available, what is the initial step? Is it a safety concern or is determined by the community?

A: It may be a combination thereof, however, we strongly recommend that you participate in the Neighborhood Planning Unit process whereby projects are selected based on the priorities of the community and collectively brought before the City's Department of Planning for consideration. To find out more about the NPU process please visit www.atlantaga.gov or call (404) 330-6899.

Q: Individual communities and neighborhoods do a great job at maintaining public areas, but outside on the main street doesn't always look great. Is there an opportunity to talk with the people who are planning and developing these things about what exactly fits our culture and what fits better in our communities so we can have input into the kind of street design.

A: That is the purpose of this type of meeting so we can hear those types of comments. We heard an overwhelming consensus tonight that the community would not like to have a grass strip included in these projects. We have done things in other areas, i.e. red brick pavers for installing the sidewalk against the curb that could be considered here.

Q: Is there a way that we can see a list of what is planned for our neighborhoods?

A: Absolutely, you can request this information from the Department of Planning or through your NPU.

Q: How can we as a community know what dollars are still available and designated to this community?

A: There are various funding sources for various types of projects. You can speak to your Council representative information. The Department of Public Works Office of Transportation provides reports to the Council with regard to transportation related funding for projects. You may also contact them directly at (404) 330-6739 to request a listing.



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Additional Discussion

Council Jim Maddox welcomed residents and thanked them for their support and participation in the meeting. He informed citizens that the Campbellton-Cascade Corridor Project won an award and thanked those who had direct input. He reiterated the plan belongs to the citizens – it is their recommendations that have been adopted by the Council. He gave a brief report on the TAD (Tax Allocation District) and stated he serves as chair and the TAD was passed through Council and to move forward will require the Board of Education and the Fulton County Commission to pass the plan. Once this is done, the plan will be implemented and people who want to develop in that area will get some assistance.

Council Maddox explained this is the first time this has happened in the Cascade, Metropolitan, and M.L. King, Jr. Drive areas. He shared his excitement about it being the first time the community has this type of opportunity to implement development in these areas and the development has to be in accordance with the plan adopted by the community. Council Maddox stated he will keep the community advised and will conduct a Town Hall meeting to provide a status report on the Southwest Sidewalks Improvement Project and several other initiatives for District 11 in the near future.

Next Steps

Miriam P. Cumming informed residents the “next steps” will include synthesizing public comments with technical analysis and the City will return to the community in the Fall of 2007 with recommendations regarding the implementation of design concepts and the construction process. She informed residents that the next meeting will be held at Providence Baptist Church. A public notification with the upcoming meeting information will be provided. A summary report of the current meeting will be available within one week.

City of Atlanta Staff:

Michele Wynn, P.E., Project Manager, Department of Public Works
Valerie Bell-Smith, Sr. Public Relations Manager, Department of Public Works

Consulting Staff

Ryan Helan, HDR, Engineering, Inc.
Miriam P. Cummings, Malvada Consulting Group

Special Attendees:

Jim Maddox, City Council District 11
Charletta Jacks, Zoning Administrator, Department of Planning and Community Development